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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP REVEALS
TRANSPARENCY-ENHANCING WORK PLAN

Sensitive But Unclassified, Please Protect Accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The Kosovo Assembly formally unveiled a new work plan on June 7 designed to improve procedural and budgetary transparency. International advisors, including USAID, have been very involved in the development of this plan and heads of diplomatic liaison offices, including COM, praised it on its unveiling. Assembly political party leaders have already unanimously approved these changes and the Assembly approved them by a majority vote on June 1 for immediate implementation. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) The Assembly unveiled a work plan to diplomatic liaison offices on June 8 that seeks to reform Assembly procedure and align it with standards set by European parliaments and by UNMIK's Standards for Kosovo program process. Assembly political caucuses unanimously approved the work plan and the Assembly approved them by a majority vote on June 1.

¶3. The two central pillars of the new work plan are the adoption of an annual calendar to outline semi-monthly plenary sessions and regular Assembly Presidency meetings, and increased support to the parliamentary committees. (COMMENT: Former Assembly president Nexhat Daci strictly controlled the dates of plenary sessions and was often accused by colleagues of running roughshod over committees. END COMMENT.) At the urging of U.S. Mission staff, international donors have now coordinated their assistance to the Assembly as well. As of May, the European Agency for Reconstruction is providing technical assistance to committees and central-level budget support; OSCE is continuing to provide Assembly monitoring and has a former member of the Bundestag as a regular in-house Assembly advisor; USAID and NDI are both providing full-time advisors.

¶4. (SBU) According to Berisha's political advisor Rame Manaj, several new initiatives will be included in upcoming revisions to the Assembly's rules of procedure to facilitate a "space for the opposition." These include regular outlined question and answer periods (during which individual members can oblige a Minister to explain or defend the actions and policy decisions of their ministries) and clearer rules

governing when a parliamentary caucus can request the Assembly Presidency place a particular item on a plenary session agenda. NDI's David Payne told poloff June 7 that in the five years under former Assembly president Daci, the Assembly only allowed ten formal question and answer periods and entertained two requests by a parliamentary caucus to place an item on the agenda for the plenary session.

¶5. (SBU) Liaison office heads received the plan June 8 with open praise for Berisha. The Austrian head of office noted that this was the first time an Assembly president had convened such a meeting for liaison offices. After the COM said that he welcomed Berisha's changes designed to create a more democratic Kosovo Assembly, Berisha responded that he would continue to work diligently for democratic reforms, and promised to work to enact minority-related pieces of legislation on the use of languages, cultural heritage and freedom of religion before the Assembly's summer recess.

¶6. (U) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable for release in its entirety to U.S. Special Envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari.

GOLDBERG